

The good, the bad, the strange!



NASA JSC 2001e19252 photo by David DeHoyos
Brandi Jones, left, and Deandra Sanchez face a day's worth of mail in the Information Services Center, located in Building 2.

ISC walk-up service hours are now between noon and 4 p.m. only

What is available to you at the ISC?

- ✓ Lithographs (every shuttle crew, emblems of past programs, planets, astronomical features and more)
- ✓ Brochures on facilities, spacecraft and even the Clear Lake/ NASA area
- ✓ Information pamphlets
- ✓ V.I.P. packets
- ✓ Education packets
- ✓ Bookmarks
- ✓ Posters
- ✓ NASA stickers
- ✓ Teacher guides
- ✓ Aerospace coloring activities
- ✓ Mission patch decals
- ✓ Shuttle glider kits
- ✓ The ever-popular NASA antenna balls

By Eric Raub

Many at JSC have benefited from the multitude of pictures, information booklets, bookmarks and other NASA material distributed by the Information Services Center (ISC), located in Building 2N in Room 172.

But, the ISC staff performs a lesser known - but equally important - job too. Deandra Sanchez and Brandi Jones serve as the front line for JSC's interaction with the general public.

Just as all of the letters addressed to "Santa" or the "North Pole" eventually end up somewhere, so do all of the letters simply sent to "NASA" or "Space." Those would be the numerous letters on the desks and in the bins and boxes all around the ISC.

While letters will sit quietly on a desk until they can be attended to, phone calls and e-mail demand as much immediate attention as the ISC staff can give to them. The ISC office is the phone number the general public uses for inquiries. They also have hundreds of e-mails addressed to info@jsc.nasa.gov currently waiting for attention.

To accommodate all of the demands placed upon it, the ISC's hours have recently been changed to allow walk-up service between noon and 4 p.m. only. Employees can always fill out a request form, located on the ISC door, if the office is closed. Requests are filled within 24 hours.

"We had to cut back on the hours because of all of the bulk mailings, letter answering, etc.," said Barbara Tomaro, Information and Media Services Supervisor. "It was interrupting the flow."

And what a flow it is. The questions that pour into the ISC daily are as interesting as they are varied.

Many of the letters are from children who have questions about the space program, including the all-time favorite:

"How do you go to the bathroom in space?" Other inquirers want information about how to become an astronaut.

Whatever the request, the ISC team has to respond. And while the ISC does what it can to fill the legitimate requests of employees and the general public, it must also deal with those who never ask for anything except attention. The ISC has many colorful characters that stay in constant contact with the office—despite never receiving an answer because they never ask a question.

One such individual sends them an air-mail message across the Pacific, sometimes everyday, with just a thought or suggestion. The person signs each small piece of paper as "Emperor of the Earth."

Unidentified Flying Object sightings are regularly reported to the ISC too. The ISC staff regularly tells those who report their experience that neither they nor JSC has anything to do with monitoring UFO activities.

Also, the staff has received audio cassettes and computer disks that must be turned over to security. That's something the ISC staff is glad to do, given the strange things they have seen, heard and received before.

"Once we got a call from a man yelling that the 'damn Hubble telescope' was taking pictures of him again and we'd better reposition it," said Barbara Tomaro said. "One woman called saying that a laser was being fired at her house, knocking bricks off and chanting 'NASA! NASA! NASA!'"

While their work is demanding, both Sanchez and Jones said they love their jobs.

"We have the second best job here at NASA, in our opinion, besides being an astronaut," Jones said. "We deal with everybody—in-house, outside and astronauts. We are the voice of NASA. Whenever someone calls NASA, they get us." ■



NASA JSC 2001e19253 photo by David DeHoyos
Jones and Sanchez stand in front of ISC shelves containing numerous lithographs, posters and other NASA educational material that is available to JSC employees.